THE

CHILD'S MAGAZINE,

AND

SUNDAY-SCHOLAR'S COMPANION.

MAY, 1832.

RACERS IN THE ANCIENT GAMES.

The ancients had many public amusements. Many of them were of a barbarous nature, and quite contrary to

the spirit of Christianity. The public combats with wild beasts were of this sort. In them criminals condemned to death were exposed to fight with lions, bears, wild bulls, and other savage beasts, and the people took pleasure in seeing their fellow-creatures torn to pieces by these fierce animals! The Apostle Paul compares his having to withstand his enemies at Ephesus, (Acts xix.,) to a combat of this nature. (1 Cor. xv. 32.) In many passages wicked men are spoken of as wild beasts. Herod is compared to a fox, Luke xiii. 32. Hypocrites are called wolves in sheep's clothing, Matt. vii. 15. See also Acts xx. 29; Phil. iii. 2, &c.

We do not find any thing of the sort usually described as public amusements mentioned among the Jews. Among the Heathens there were many, and to them there are various references in Scripture. The Olympic games were the most famous. On those occasions people came from all parts of the world

to see the contests, which were principally racing and wrestling. Only persons of good character and of respectable families were allowed to contend for the prizes, which were merely crowns of leaves and palm-branches; but the honour of being a conqueror at these contests was very great: even Kings sometimes engaged in these games. In the races the runners threw aside all their garments, and on an appointed signal rushed forward in the sight of many thousand spectators. The rewards were presented to their view at the end of the course, which was kept clear from every obstruction. This illustrates that beautiful passage, Heb. xii. 1—3, 12, 13. St. Paul, in another place, alludes to these contests in a striking manner. See 1 Cor. ix. 24—27.

The racers and other candidates for the prizes lived on a particular diet for some time before the day of the contest; and the Apostle strongly urges the followers of Christ to consider the

pains and privations which the Heathen endured for a poor, fading, worldly honour. He shows how much more in earnest they should be, since a reward infinitely greater was offered to them. This passage is in one of St. Paul's epistles to the inhabitants of Corinth; and the games to which the Apostle alludes were celebrated near that city.

The same circumstances explain two other beautiful passages in the epistles: one is, Phil. iii. 13, 14; the other, 2 Tim. iv. 7, 8. Let not our readers suppose that the Apostle, by referring to the games and customs of those times, meant to encourage or approve of Christians engaging therein. And let them not suppose that the games and races, &c., practised at wakes and fairs in the present day, are countenanced thereby. The ancient games were conducted with much order and solemnity by the Heathens; the greatest and best characters among them engaged therein; and they were in their view religious

ceremonies. But we live in a better day, and in the light of the Gospel; we do not offer such worship; and no one can suppose that riotous and wicked practices, so prevalent at our wakes and fairs, are pleasing to God, or approved by his word. They are "the revellings, and such like," (Gal. v. 21,) of which the Apostle expressly declares, that "they that do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God." It is also to be remarked, that most of our wakes are the continuance of heathen revellings, which were practised by our forefathers, when Pagans, many centuries ago; for when the Romish Missionaries were sent to this country by Pope Gregory, about the year 600, they allowed these revels to be continued, that they might the more easily persuade the Saxons, who then ruled England, to profess themselves to be Christians. Let us earnestly pray for grace, that we may be enabled to run the race which is set before us, and to wrestle with the corruptions of

our hearts, seeking for strength from the Lord.

——o——

MISSIONARY ANECDOTES.

A LITTLE girl in Gloucestershire used to subscribe one half-penny per week to an Auxiliary Missionary Society; but by the failure of employment where she had been used to work, she found herself unable to continue her subscription: yet, being unwilling wholly to decline her contribution, she devised the following method:—The farmers being in the habit of allowing the poor to glean in their potatoe fields, she went one morning, and, with no small labour, procured a basket full of potatoes. These she carried to the Collector who used to receive her subscription, and begged him to accept of the potatoes instead of money.

The Collector objected, that he never received any thing of this sort for a subscription; and that he could not

accept them, for they belonged properly to her mother.

The child went home much disappointed, and told her mother the whole. The mother immediately returned with her daughter to the Collector, and requested him to accept the potatoes, saying, "Sir, I was once a poor blind Papist; but now, blessed be God, I know the value of the Gospel, and wish every body to know it too; and I thank God that I have a child who feels this concern for the poor Heathen."

About this time a neighbour came, and wishing to gratify the good woman and her child, purchased the potatoes, and gave the full value of them to the Collector.

When Dr. Williams, of Stroud, related this little anecdote at a late Anniversary Meeting at Bristol, a person rose and said, "I am the person that bought the potatoes."

Another little girl in the same neighbourhood, wishing to make her con-

tributions also to the same cause, devised the following method :—She made dolls' bonnets, and sent them to Gloucester for sale, applying the produce to the Missionary cause.

Another Clergyman lately gave the following account :—" One of my Sunday-school children was so affected at the account I gave them of the little African slaves, that for several days she was in distress because her parents, who each subscribed a penny per week, could not afford to do the same for her. On hearing this, it was proposed to send her work from the parsonage : she eagerly caught at the proposal, and though only eight years of age, (said the Clergyman,) sits down regularly, contented and happy, to employ her little fingers in the behalf of the poor Heathen."

The following instance exhibits the zeal of a poor American labourer in the State of Vermont. By labour and self-denial, in the course of one year, he

saved eight dollars,—five for the Foreign Missionary, and three for the Education, Society. The method by which he effected this is somewhat curious:—by working on the 4th of July, (the anniversary of American Independence,) three-fourths of a dollar,—by not wearing a neck-handkerchief, one dollar,—by denying himself and family the use of spirituous liquors, one dollar,—by wearing his fulled cloth undressed, one dollar and a quarter,—by wearing, himself and family, thick shoes, four dollars.—Total, eight dollars.—*Burder's Missionary Anecdotes.*

——o——

THE LITTLE WANDERER.

A FEW weeks since, being at the house of one of my father's friends, I was pleased to see the management of his family, especially that part which pertains to the instruction of his children. We had been conversing about the benevolent efforts which are now making

to lay the treasures of the Gospel at the feet of every human being. We were about closing the interesting conversation when a white-headed little boy, who had been listening very attentively, climbed upon his father's knees and inquired, "what made people give away their money, and do so many missionary things." "The same reason, my son, that caused Jesus Christ to come to our world and die for us. Do you know why he did this?" "Yes, father: to save lost men. But what is meant by *lost* men?" "I will tell you, my child, as well as I can. Some years ago I had a friend who was travelling in the northern part of Vermont. The country was then mostly new, the trees were not cut down, houses were not thickly built. My friend was on horseback. On one occasion he was benighted just as he was entering some woods, which were several miles through before he could come to a house. Soon darkness came on, together with a thick fog. It was so

dark that he could not see to guide his horse, and so he let him follow his own course. The wolves were prowling and howling around, and now and then the yell of the catamount would echo through the forest. As my friend was riding slowly along in this gloomy situation he thought he heard a child cry! He stopped and listened. He still heard it. It seemed to be off in the woods on the right, perhaps at the distance of fifty rods. He listened, and still heard its cry. What should he do? He did not know but it was a catamount, as they will sometimes imitate a human voice, in order to allure men to them. He did not know but robbers wished to draw him away, that they might murder him. If it was a child, it was so dark he knew not that he could find it. He listened, and now and then heard its cry continue. He was a resolute and benevolent man; so he dismounted, tied his horse, and went into the woods towards where he heard the

cry. After going some forty rods he stopped, and listened, and heard the cry still father off in a different direction. He follows it. After going some distance, he stops, stands bending forward in the attitude of listening; all is silent and dark; something catches hold of his pantaloons and pulls; he stoops down to see what it is, when a sweet voice says, "Pa! is it you?" He took up the little boy, about three or four years old; he now seeks for his horse, and as if Providence gave him special direction, he comes out right by him. He rode forward with the boy in his arms, till he came to a house. On entering, he found it was the house of the little child's father, to whom he now brought back his little lost boy. The father and mother almost fainted when they saw their son, and all the younger members of the family jumped and clapped their hands, when they again saw little Henry return. Poor little fellow! he had been lost from his

father's house almost three days, and they had been all this time seeking him. He was pale, and almost starved; but he was glad to get home, and his return filled the family with great joy, for they were mourning and weeping over him when the stranger brought him in! Now, my son, was it not noble, generous, and benevolent, for my friend thus to expose his life to seek the little wandering Henry in the dark woods?" "Yes, father, he was a brave, good man." "Well, it was such a spirit, such a compassion, that caused Jesus Christ to come into the world, when all men had left their Father's house, like little Henry, and were wandering in darkness and sin, as he was in the wilderness. God is our Father, and heaven our home; but men are going astray, and are not seeking this home. You see then why it is that good people send Missionaries and Bibles to the Heathen: it is because they feel compassion for them; because Christ has

commanded them to go and call his world of wanderers to return to their Father's house." S. J. W.

—o—

THE NEW-BORN BABE.

Suggested by the following Epigram, translated from the Persian by Sir William Jones.

"On parents' knees, a naked new-born child,
Weeping thou sat'st, while all around thee smiled;
So live, that, sinking in thy long last sleep,
Calm thou mayst smile when all around thee weep."

Naked, weeping, helpless babe,
By unerring wisdom made;
Object of thy parents' care,
Subject of our frequent prayer,
Pleasing smiles our joys impart,
Bid thee welcome to our heart.
Should thy life to years extend,
Grace and truth thy steps attend.
Live, beneath the smile of God;
Live, by faith in Jesu's blood;

Live, imbued with sacred love;
Live, in hope to dwell above;
Live, to smile, when others weep;
Sweetly in thy Saviour sleep;
Mount as on a cherub's wing;
Gaze on *Him* whom angels sing;
Prostrate fall before his face,
Lost in wonder, love, and praise.

Lerwick, Oct., 1831. R. TABRAHAM.

The Fruit of early pious Instruction shown in Conversations with a little Girl in Aberdeen, about five years of age.

CONVERSATION I.

Amelia. Mamma, will you allow me to rise and pray?

Mamma. My dear, it is midnight, and very cold: I fear it would hurt you to rise; but, you know, God can hear you if you pray on your bed.

A. O mamma, I should so like to rise and pray.

M. What is it, my dear, that leads you to wish to pray?

A. I feel my heart inclined to pray; and I think God would hear me, though I am but a little child.

M. I am very glad, my dear, that you feel inclined to pray. God has put this good thought into your heart; and if you will pray to him through his blessed Son, I am sure he will hear you, though you are in your bed.

A. Mamma, how do you feel when God blesses you?

M. Why, my dear, do you ask me such a question?

A. Because, mamma, I think God has heard my prayer, and blessed my soul, I feel so very happy.

M. Well, my dear, this must encourage you to pray again; and to hope that God will bless you more and more: only you must be a good child, or you will displease the Lord; then your prayers will be in vain.

A. Thank you, mamma: I will try to mind what you say, when I awake in the morning. Good night, mamma: I am going to sleep now.

M. Good night, my dear! May He who loves little children make my Amelia his child.

SECOND CONVERSATION.

A. O Sir, I have been wishing for a long time that you would come from the chapel.

Minister. Have you, my dear? Did you want to say any thing to me?

A. I wanted to say, Sir, I fear I have not got a new heart yet.

M. But what do you mean by a new heart, Amelia?

A. Sir, I mean a heart that is good, and loves God, and thinks about him, and prays to him, and tries to please him.

M. But how came you to think about possessing a new heart?

A. Sir, the last time Mr. M— was here, (and you know I love him very much,) he spoke to me about it, and told me I must pray to God for it.

M. Well, but do you think that such a little girl as you can need a new heart?

A. O yes, Sir; for I feel that my heart is not good, and does not always strive to please God.

M. I am glad to hear that you know that your heart is not good, and that you must have a new one before you can be holy or happy. But what makes you think God has not given you a new heart?

A. Sir, I am sure he has not; for sometimes I am very disobedient to my mamma, which you know is very wicked; and I am sorry for it; and I hope I shall be better: only I must have a new heart.

M. But can you tell me, my dear, how it is that you have not yet got this new heart, as you seem so concerned about it?

A. I fear, Sir, I do not pray to God as I ought; but I will try to be in earnest.

M. The good Lord send his Holy Spirit upon you, my child, to make you holy, and bring you at last to his eternal joy.

Lerwick, August 31, 1831.

LITTLE CHARLES.

I ONCE went into a Sabbath-school where I was a stranger, and was requested by the Superintendent to take

a class of very small children, who could not read, and talk to them.

Now I always love to talk to little children when they are good, and pay attention to what I say; and this time the little boys were very attentive, and kept their eyes on me all the time I was talking. I cannot stop to tell you all about these children, because it would take me too long; but I want to tell you a little about one of them, whose name was Charles.

Charles was only six years old, and had been to the Sabbath-school only a short time; and having never had any opportunity to learn any thing before he went there, he could neither read nor say any lessons of any kind. His parents were wicked people, and had never taught him to love God and good things, but used to let him say wicked words, and quarrel and fight; so that he was a very bad boy.

I told him how very wicked it was to do as he did, and that if he did not

leave off saying wicked words and fighting, he would grow up a bad boy, and would then no doubt make a bad man, and might end his days on the gallows; and I told him, too, how angry God always was with wicked children, and how he would punish them for their wickedness when they died, by sending them away to that place where all wicked people go, and where they live for ever very miserable.

Charles seemed to be affected by what I said to him, and promised to think of it, and try to be a good boy in future. And I believe he *did* try, and I believe he prayed to God to help him, too; for when I went to the same Sabbath-school again, about a year afterward, I found him there in the same class, and his teacher told me that he had left off swearing and fighting, and came to school every Sabbath, and got his lessons very well, and he hoped he would make a very good boy.

Now, what I want my young friends

to do, is to get some good from this short story about little Charles. If any of you are as wicked as he used to be, I want you now to leave off your wicked habits, and pray to God to forgive you, and to help you to do as you ought. I want you also to be very careful not to get into the company of bad boys, where you would learn to do and say wicked things, as Charles once did.—*Amer. Advocate.*

———o———

CHILD'S TRACT BLESSED TO AN AGED SINNER.

Within the bounds of every religious congregation, (says a Clergyman in Connecticut,) there are some who neglect the means of grace, and come to maturity without hope and without God in the world. They can scarcely be allured to the house of God on any occasion, and spend the Sabbath in idleness and sin,—haters of religion, and persecutors of the saints. A man of

this description, who had a pious wife, carried his enmity to religion so far as to enter the praying circle, and drag her forcibly away. He remained in this desperate state of mind till a Sabbath-school was formed in the neighbourhood, with a small library. Very unexpectedly, he permitted his children to attend. One of them brought home a small tract containing the history of

the conversion of a little child. This tract lay on the table, and one rainy day, to the astonishment of his wife, (for he never read a book of a religious kind, not even the Bible,) he took up the tract and sat down to read. Before he had finished reading, he arose in an agony of feeling, and left the house. He was in great distress on reviewing his past life, abandoning at intervals the hope of mercy, for a number of days; when he was released from the bondage of iniquity, and found all things new. On learning the tidings of his marvellous conversion, I called one evening to see him: it was the hour of evening prayer. The sound of his voice, mellowed by penitence, humility, and joy, as it reached me on the threshold, while reading a portion of Scripture applicable to his former condition, I can never forget. It is about two years since, and his life has been that of an humble and sincere believer.—*American Tract Mag.*

SUNDAY-SCHOOL BENEVOLENCE.

In the Sunday-school where I labour, (remarks one of our correspondents,) there are many boys who have lately begun to fear and love God, and have given good proof that they "love their brother also." An instance of this has lately occurred. On hearing that one of the boys who mixes with them to sing and pray (but who belongs to another Sunday-school) was very ill, and also poor, they agreed to make a collection for their sick friend. They set about it in earnest, and of their own accord, and raised no less than three shillings and three-pence, which was sent by the hands of one of the teachers to the sick boy. The money thus bestowed was a part of the small allowance given them by their parents on the Saturday night, out of their wages, as an encouragement; and which used formerly to be spent in toys and folly.

In the day when every cup of cold

water given to the lovers of Christ shall be rewarded, doubtless this noble offering out of their penury will not be overlooked. H.

—o—

ADVICE FROM A BEE.

Pretty bee, pray tell me why
Thus from flower to flower you fly,
Culling sweets the live-long day,
Never leaving off to play.

Little child, I'll tell you why
Thus from flower to flower I fly:
Let the cause thy thoughts engage,
From thy youth to riper age.

Summer flowers will soon be o'er,
Winter comes, they bloom no more;
Finest days will soon be past,
Brightest suns will set at last.

Little child, now learn of me,
Let thy youth the seed-time be;
So when wintry age shall come,
Shalt thou bear thy harvest home.

CHRISTOPHER GEORGE.

CHRISTOPHER GEORGE, late a scholar in Wesley Chapel Sunday-school, Falmouth, died April 7, 1831, aged seven years, giving abundant proof of the good effects of Sabbath-school instruction. Although so young, he seemed to have a mind which rose above the world, and he showed his love for that which is good by a regular attendance on the means of grace, as well as on the Sunday-school, to which he was much attached. He would often watch for the house of God being opened, and remind his friends when the hour for divine worship had arrived. If they were by any means detained at home, he would go alone, and often on dark winter evenings he has been known to remain in the chapel, after public service was over, to join with those who continued a little longer for singing and prayer. While there, his behaviour was good; he always listened with apparent interest. At home or abroad, his de-

portment was the same,—mild and teachable on all occasions; and he frequently collected the children together to sing and pray with them. While in the Sunday-school, he behaved well; and by his steady application was generally to be seen at the head of his class. Being rather reserved, he was never forward in answering the questions put to him by his teacher, but he always received instruction with much seriousness.

For some months his attendance had been irregular, in consequence of his weak state of health. About a month before his death, his case was declared hopeless; and he knew himself to be fast sinking into the grave. At first he appeared to be rather concerned. The thought of being laid in a coffin disturbed his mind, till within a fortnight of his departure, when a visible change had taken place in him. That reserve, which formerly seemed natural, had fled; his tongue was loosed, and he

declared that heaven was in full prospect. Being asked by his friends if he would rather live, he said, "No, I would rather die, and go to heaven." Indeed his soul seemed to be absorbed in the anticipation of heaven; his conversation in general was on its glories and enjoyments; and often would he repeat the little hymns which, unknown to his friends, he had committed to memory. He requested that a hymn should be sung at his funeral, and chose the one beginning,—

"The morning flowers display their sweets."

It was his wish that when his father returned from sea, he should be made acquainted with his happy end.

About three days before his death he expressed a wish to see a particular friend; who says, "On entering the room, his appearance was striking: he was partly raised in the bed, and his little hands and eyes were uplifted to heaven, apparently in an act of devotion.

His sufferings seemed great. When I approached him, he opened his arms to embrace me, and said faintly, 'O what shall I do?' 'You are very ill, my dear,' I said. 'Yes,' he replied. 'You are dying,' I continued, 'and going to heaven.' 'Yes,' he said, 'there I shall have a pretty crown!' and then went on to describe, in his simple manner, the glorious things he should see, and the happiness he should enjoy, frequently lifting up his eyes and arms, as if ready to

> 'Clap the glad wing, and soar away,
> And mingle with the blaze of day.'"

He continued in this frame of mind until the Thursday following, when, after calmly taking leave of each of his friends, he fell asleep in Him who has said, "Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not; for of such is the kingdom of heaven."

Falmouth, May 4, 1831. W. Lawry.

POETRY.

MY MOTHER'S VOICE.

My mother's voice I often hear,
When all beside is still,
Save the slight rustling of the elm,
And the little gurgling rill.

It strikes upon my longing ear,
It enters quick my brain;
I fancy she is watching me,
And I'm a boy again.

My mother's voice comes home to me,
When night has veil'd the skies;
Ah yes, it seems that she is near,
When sleep has closed my eyes.

Methinks I feel her gentle hand
Press lightly on my brow,
As on my languid form she gazed,
Dreading the worst to know.

My mother's voice, how sweet the sound!
How pleasant is its tone!
It comes to me with the breath of morn,
And again I sigh for home.

I love to dwell upon those scenes
Which memory brings to view;
Of friends—of home—of happy dreams,
To which I 've bid adieu.

How oft, when, by my mother's side,
Engaged in sportive glee,
I 've seen the tears steal from her eye,
As if "*afraid of me!*"

And when I ask'd my mother dear,
"Pray tell me why 'tis so,
That from thine eye the briny tear
Is seen so oft to flow:"

She answer'd, with a warm embrace,
"'Tis all for thee, my son;
For soon thy mother's days will cease,
And thou wilt be alone.

"But O, my son, there is a God
Who will thy Father be,
If thou wilt love his holy word,
Obey his firm decree.

"He will protect thy life, my son,
If thou wilt in him trust,
And keep the same when I am gone
And mingling with the dust.

"Here, take this little book, my boy,
'Tis all I have to give;
It will afford thy bosom joy;
Believe it—thou shalt live.

"Thus will thy life pass on serene,
Calm as an evening sky,
And thou shalt say, when death shall come,
'*I am prepared to die.*'"

June 1, 1831. ALBERT.